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Dr. Parnell has again returned to Britain after a residence in Jamaica, Cuba, and others of the West Indian Islands. Ornithology and Ichthyology have been chiefly attended to, and large collections in both departments accompany him. In the latter above 300 species have been procured, with a series of drawings recording the natural colours of the specimens. Dr. Parnell has also been entrusted with all the Ichthyological manuscripts and drawings collected by Dr. Bancroft, and altogether materials have been brought home for a History of the Fishes of Jamaica.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Crania Americana, or a comparative view of the Skulls of various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America, to which is prefixed an Essay on the varieties of the Human Species. By S. G. Morton, M.D. Folio, 78 Plates. London : Simpkin and Marshall.

In the present state of Anthropological science, the value of a work of this kind must depend more upon the accuracy of the anatomical facts which it contains, than upon the opinions expressed by its author on the many difficult questions which are still agitated by the cultivators of this interesting department of natural history. Dr. Morton is aware of this, and has produced a work, in which, while he has not neglected to present to his readers, in an ably written introduction, an abstract of the present state of opinions as to the origin of the races and the geographical distribution of man, he has at the same time evidently directed his whole energy to the formation of a series of chapters, containing anatomical delineations, measurements, and descriptions of the crania of more than forty American nations and tribes, ancient and modern.

The manner in which Dr. Morton has recorded the observations which he has had such ample opportunities of making, shows that he is well acquainted with the exact nature of the facts necessary for the further prosecution of this subject. The lithographic drawings of crania are admirable ; the measurements, both of capacity and size (his mode of taking which he describes), precise ; and the information in reference to each variety judiciously selected.

The author divides the pure Americans into three great classes,—those which live by hunting, fishing, and agriculture. The first embraces the great proportion of the race ; the second includes a few tribes in different and far-distant parts of the two continents ; the third contains these nations which had made the greatest advance in civilization, and whose geographical position afforded facilities for agricultural pursuits.

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tiousness and vigilance, in regard to every action, to be the mental characteristics of the American race.

Dr. Morton commences his *Cranioscopy* with the Peruvian head, and after describing and representing the naturally and often artificially flattened and retreating forehead, and the extraordinary elongation backwards of the occiput in this race, refers to the very natural question,—how a people, with crania so small and so badly formed, could have arrived at the degree of civilization which architectural remains and historical evidence prove them to have done? He holds that the country was civilized before the advent of the Incas, and that these anciently civilized people constituted the identical nation whose extraordinary skulls he has represented. Without fully assenting to this opinion, it must be admitted, that there is no further evidence of the existence of a race anterior to that which preceded the Incas, except the mere suspicion that it would require better-formed heads than those in question to erect the Cyclopean monuments of Peru.

We are next conducted by Dr. Morton to the crania of the Patagonian in the south; to those of the nations on the Orinoco, and of the tribes of Brazil; to the Mexican head, with its large and massive developments, its full, broad, but retreating forehead, and great interparietal breadth; and to the singular artificially-elevated heads of the Natchez.

He then proceeds to the tribes of eastern North America, and to the nations of the west and the Colombia district, representing and describing the artificially-depressed crania of the Flatheads.

An inquiry into the geographical distribution of the mounds, and an examination of the skulls from these tumuli, leads the Doctor to consider the people who reared them to have belonged to the great Toltecan race.

Lastly, the examination of the skulls of the Esquimaux, the Mongul American of the North, conducts us to the only example of Asiatic configuration in the western hemisphere.

From his extensive inquiries and opportunities for observation, Dr. Morton concludes, 1. That the American race differs essentially from all others, not excepting the Mongolian; and that the feeble analogies of language, and the obvious ones of civil and religious institutions, do not prove at the most anything beyond casual or colonial communication with the Asiatic nations, and that even these analogies may be accounted for in the mere coincidence arising from similar wants and impulses in nations inhabiting similar localities; 2. that the American nations, with the exception of the Polar tribes, are of one race and one species, but of two great families, which resembled each other in physical, but differed in intellectual characters; and, 3. that the cranial remains discovered in the mounds from Peru to Wisconsin belong to the same race, and probably to the Toltecan family.

These conclusions contain much that must still remain doubtful in the present state of the question; but Dr. Morton has effected a most important service in the cause of natural science in contributing a

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The solution of the great problem of the origin and distribution of the human race has occupied the attention of naturalists, anatomists and linguists, but hitherto with little success. In reference to the future progress of the question, it may be well to remark here, that the same circumstance which has retarded so much the advancement of the physiology of the human body has in like manner retarded the discovery of the mode of origin and distribution of the different races of men. There must be brought to bear upon this subject, in a more exclusive manner than hitherto, a knowledge of the laws of distribution and variation of other species of organized beings—laws which, although counteracted to a certain extent by the intellectual peculiarities of man, have most undoubtedly regulated the various changes which have taken place in the progeny of our first parents.

The Birds of Australia. By John Gould, F.L.S., &c. Part First. Oblong folio. Published by the Author, London, December 1840.

It may be recollected by many of our readers, that an expedition for the purpose of investigating the zoology, but more particularly the ornithology, of Australia, was undertaken by Mr. Gould nearly three years since; that gentleman was accompanied by Mrs. Gould, previously well known as an accomplished ornithological draughtswoman, and they have now returned, after a residence of nearly two years and a half in Australia, Van Diemen's Land, Bass Straits, &c., laden with spoils. Six or eight weeks were often spent together in the most interior "Bush," the time devoted entirely to the study and collection of the animals and birds frequenting the districts visited. Mr. Gould's principal object being ornithology, a very large collection has been made of birds, with their nests, eggs and skeletons. Other departments also have been attended to, and the species in each have been distributed to persons who, from their pursuits and rank in science, are enabled to do justice to the different branches, and we trust that ere long the novelties in each will be made public. To Mr. Brown has been sent the collection of plants, the Rev. Mr. Hope has the insects, and to Professor Owen has been entrusted all the preparations fitted for dissection; even Mr. Denny has not been neglected. The birds and quadrupeds will be Mr. Gould's peculiar charge, and, if illustrated in a manner similar to that which has been begun, they will prove of the utmost importance to our store of works devoted to the illustration of those departments. This undertaking, of which the first number has just appeared, will be published in quarterly parts, uniform in size with the author's previous works, containing seventeen plates each, at a cost of £3.3s. The execution of the plates, and the colouring by Bayfield, are both beautiful, and exhibit all the advantages of having been made from drawings taken on the spot. The real form and colours are represented as in the living bird, and the form of the nostrils and various wattles and bare skins, so prevalent among the Australian forms,

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are given as they never could have been under any other circumstances. The native plants are also correctly delineated and grouped with the birds, which renders the work interesting to a botanist.

Among the more remarkable species represented now, is the *Alectura Lathamii*, a bird which has been an object of speculation among ornithologists until the present time. The venerable Latham, to whom it has been dedicated, originally described it as a Vulture, but afterwards saw reason to change his opinion, and to place it among the Rasorial birds. The same view was taken by the authors of the 'Illustrations of Ornithology,' who placed it as the Australian representative of the *Cracidae* or *Megapodinae*, but Mr. Swainson in his late Treatise has again restored it to its ancient place. The observations of Mr. Gould have now, however, decided the proper station to be that which Latham assigned to it, and have in addition brought to light some most remarkable points in its œconomy. We have instances of several birds leaving their eggs to be hatched by warmth of the sun, but nowhere have we seen a bed artificially prepared for that purpose so as to generate heat. The *Alectura* collects large heaps of dried leaves and grasses, several of the birds assisting at the same time; and when the heat by fermentation has become sufficient for the purpose, the eggs are placed in an upright position, separated from nine to twelve inches apart, in this dunghill or artificial hot-bed, and apparently left to their fate. It is stated that "it is not an unusual event to obtain nearly a bushel of eggs at one time from a single heap." Another fine bird is figured under the name of *Leipoa ocellata*, possessing the strong feet of the *Megapodinae*, but in the other parts of its form evidently representing *Penelope*. This bird also leaves its incubation to be performed artificially: the eggs "are deposited in a mound of sand, the formation of which is the work of both sexes; the inside being constructed of alternate layers of dried leaves, grasses, &c., among which the eggs are deposited, to the number of twelve and upwards. They are hatched by the heat of the sun's rays, the vegetable lining of the hillock retaining sufficient warmth during the night." This species is yet little known, and is from Western Australia, frequenting the barren sandy plains of the interior, 100 miles north and east of York, and known to range as far northward as Gautheume Bay. A new species of *Cinclosoma* is figured, besides other interesting birds, and a very extensive list of synonyms is given, to which it would be useful if Mr. Gould would add the date of each author referred to. We are not always certain that the prior name is selected, which appears to be the object when it is quite unobjectionable. We trust the work will meet with the encouragement it deserves, and are happy to perceive that several public institutions, both in England and Scotland have already given their names as subscribers.

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dried Algæ which have appeared under the auspices of eminent algologists. It contains twenty-five species, of which in general the specimens are excellent, and some of great interest. M. Areschoug is very desirous of entering into correspondence with British algologists, and would most thankfully receive any communication. The following species are contained in the present fasciculus :—

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| 1. <i>Fucus serratus</i> , <i>L.</i> | 14. <i>Conferva cannabina</i> , <i>Areschoug.</i> |
| 2. ——— <i>canaliculatus</i> , <i>L.</i> | 15. ——— <i>fucicola</i> , <i>Velley.</i> |
| 3. ——— <i>vesiculosus</i> , <i>L. var.</i> | 16. ——— <i>pannosa</i> , <i>Areschoug.</i> |
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De Hydrodictyo utriculato dissertatio Botanica. Dr. John Ehr.
Areschoug. Lundæ, 1839.

The present academical treatise throws new light on a very interesting subject. It has been long known that a new individual of *Hydrodictyon utriculatum* is developed from each cell in the form of a minute net produced within the cell. The mode of development, however, as far as we know, has not before been observed. No mention of it is made by Meyen, who regrets that when he had abundant specimens at his disposal he had not at hand a sufficiently good microscope.

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Verhandelingen over de Natuurlijke Geschiedenis der Nedelandsche Overzeesche Bezittingen, door de Leden der Natuurkundige Commissie in Oost-Indië en andere Schrijvers.

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